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ABSTRACT

This pamphlet outlines guidelines for the implementation of a full-time program of instruction in transitional bilingual education. The Transitional Bilingual Education Act mandates a full-time program of instruction in all those courses or subjects which a child is required by law to receive and which are required by the child's school committee. The present guidelines address the treatment of language mediums and the content to be covered in the language mediums. Discussion of the treatment of language mediums includes the language to be used as the medium of instruction at the elementary and secondary levels, the role of English in the curriculum, and the nature of change in the program - how the transition should take place. Mandated courses and subjects at both the elementary and secondary level are discussed, as well as the instruction in history and culture both in the child's dominant language and in English. Organization of the curriculum is briefly discussed, and the appendix consists of a discussion of the process of levelling, whereby each child is allowed to work at his or her ability level at all times. (CLK)

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Guidelines for Full-time Programs of Instruction in Transitional Bilingual Education

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Massachusetts Department of Education
Division of Curriculum and Instruction
Bureau of Transitional Bilingual Education

GUIDELINES — FULL-TIME PROGRAM OF INSTRUCTION IN TRANSITIONAL BILINGUAL EDUCATION

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In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 71A, Section 2, General Laws, Transitional Bilingual Education, a "program in transitional bilingual education" means a full-time program of instruction (1) in all those courses or subjects which a child is required by law to receive and which are required by the child's school committee which shall be given in the native language of the children of limited English-speaking ability who are enrolled in the program and also in English, (2) in the reading and writing of the native language of the children of limited English-speaking ability who are enrolled in the program and in the oral comprehension, speaking, reading and writing of English, and (3) in the history and culture of the country, territory or geographic area which is the native land of the parents of children of limited English-speaking ability who are enrolled in the program and in the history and culture of the United States.

> The Transitional Bilingual Act mandates a full-time program of instruction in all those courses or subjects which a child is required by law to receive and which are required by the child's school committee. The following specifications are provided with respect to the *treatment of the language mediums and the content to be covered in the language mediums.* In instances where terms used are subject to interpretation, final approval rests with the Bureau of Transitional Bilingual Education.

Every school-age child of limited English-speaking ability not enrolled in existing private school systems shall be enrolled and participate in the program in transitional bilingual education established for the classification to which he belongs by the city, town or school district in which he resides for a period of three years or until such time as he achieves a level of English language skills which will enable him to perform successfully in classes in which instruction is given only in English, whichever shall first occur.

A child of limited English-speaking ability enrolled in a program in transitional bilingual education may, at the discretion of the school committee and subject to the approval of the child's parent or legal guardian, continue in that program for a period longer than three years.

1. *Treatment of Language Mediums*

1.1 *Medium of Instruction: Dual*

The first language of the child must be used as a medium of instruction to the extent necessary to develop concepts, skills, and attitudes while a child *gradually* acquires English language skills and *gradually* develops the use of these English skills as a medium of instruction.

1.1.1 *At the elementary school level* the first language of the child must be used as a medium of instruction in *all* subject areas to the extent necessary to ensure his/her progress toward the attainment of concepts, skills, and attitudes.

1.1.2 *At the secondary school level* the first language of the child must be used as a medium of instruction to the extent necessary to ensure progress toward the acquisition of subject matter, skills and attitudes expected of students about to take a meaningful role as productive adult citizens.

1.2 *Development of the Instruction: Transfer*

It is the type of instruction whose aim is to *convert gradually* from the use of the native language medium of instruction to the English language medium of instruction.

1.3 *Direction of Instruction: English*

The direction taken by the curriculum will be toward the wider use of English as a medium of instruction within the Transitional Bilingual Program.

1.4 *Distribution: Different or Equal*

The language used as a medium of instruction may vary according to the nature of the subject matter, and the needs and linguistic proficiency of the child.

1.4.1 Except for language arts courses in the *native language* and in courses in English as a second language, subject matter shall be taught in either language, according to the language proficiency of the child. The native language of the child must be visible on a continuous basis as a medium of instruction.

1.4.2 The type of curriculum pattern suitable for a given child or group of children will depend on a number of variables particularly with respect to the learner himself.

1.4.3 Decisions to teach a particular unit, topic or subject matter in one or the other language must take into consideration the nature of the subject matter, the child's learning ability and his proficiency in such languages.

1.5 *Change: Gradual*

The change in direction must be *gradual* — meaning that the first language of the child must be used as a medium for the development of concepts, skills and attitudes while he/she *gradually* acquires English language skills and *gradually* develops the use of these English language skills for use as a medium of instruction.

1.5.1 There can be no prescription about precise percentages of time to be allocated to the use of each language as mediums; however, *reasonable* consideration must be given to the general ability of a child and to his/her previous language and school experience. Decisions regarding percentages of time are to be approved by the Bureau of Transitional Bilingual Education.

1.5.2 Decisions about the specific amount of time allotted to the use of each language as mediums and their respective distribution in the curriculum must be guided by the individual language and learning capacity and experience of the child of limited English-speaking ability.

DISCUSSION

Treatment of Language Mediums

The treatment of each language as mediums must depend upon the individual needs of a child enrolled in a program of transitional bilingual education.

Given that evaluative processes have been established upon which a reasonable judgment is made about the placement of a child in a transitional bilingual education program, a child may be assigned to a variety of curriculum patterns to suit his/her individual learning needs.

On the theoretical level, the number of possible curriculum patterns are infinite. In the real world decisions about curriculum patterns have to be based on the most practical and feasible patterns which ensure that the rights of children are satisfied on both moral and legal grounds. In no instance shall the legal rights of a child to dual medium patterning be obstructed or violated.

A monolingual Spanish-speaking child recently arrived from Puerto Rico would require most (80-90% with 10-20% ESL) of his/her instruction in the content areas in Spanish. This same child should begin to acquire English language skills immediately in the form of English as a second language (ESL).

Since second language learning is the progressive acquisition of the listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, the child *must not* be rushed or be pushed into acquiring these skills haphazardly. The order should be to acquire aural-oral skills before the acquisition of reading and writing skills.

While a child acquires oral skills in a second language he shall begin or continue the development of his reading and writing skills in his dominant language.

At the primary level a learner in a TBE program must develop basic reading and writing skills in his/her native language while only comprehension and oral skills in English are being acquired.

Once the learner has mastered basic reading skills in his/her native language, specifically designed curriculum materials and instruction will enable him/her to transfer or apply these skills into his/her second language (English).

The functionally illiterate learner in a TBE program above the primary level must develop basic reading and writing skills in his/her dominant language first while acquiring aural-oral skills in English. Every effort must be made to determine language dominancy (testing, bilingual and ESL teacher's evaluation, records, parental input, etc.). Every decision regarding placement and the nature of instruction must be made with the learner's needs and best interest in mind.

1. *CONTENT TO BE COVERED*

2.1 The fundamental principle to be applied in carrying out the issue of what subject matter is to be covered in the native language is that a "full-time program" shall be based on the individual needs of the learner in the context of the provisions stipulated in these guidelines.

2.2 Potentially all instruction offered in the curriculum may be given in the first language of the learner except the English as a second language component in which case the medium of instruction shall be English.

2.3 *Mandated Courses and Subjects*

Instruction in all those courses and subjects required by law and by the local school committee must be given in the native language to the extent necessary in order to enable the learner to progress effectively through the educational system.

2.3.1 *Elementary School Level*

Courses of instruction such as health and safety, social sciences including the history and culture of the United States, geography, mathematics and the natural sciences, must be given in the dominant language of the learner whenever the use of English as a medium for said purpose impedes the *effective* progress of the learner in the acquisition of said subject matter.

2.3.2 *Secondary School Level*

Subject matter instruction not covered elsewhere in these guidelines shall be given through the use of the native language wherever the use of English as the sole medium for said purpose prevents the student from the efficient acquisition of said subject matter.

Elective courses such as Algebra, General Science, World History, Business Law, and Typing should make use of the native language as a medium in order to ensure equal access for students to said courses and the efficient acquisition of the subject matter.

It is strongly recommended that a program be developed for those learners who are functioning at least two grade levels below the norm at the Junior High or secondary levels.

2.4 *Dominant Language, History and Culture*

Subject to the approval of the Bureau of Transitional Bilingual Education, there shall be visible evidence that the individual learner's program includes substantial instruction in the learner's native language; that is, in the reading and writing of that language and in the history and culture associated with it. This applies to programs at both the elementary and secondary schools.

2.5 *English Language Instruction, History and Culture*

There must be visible evidence that an individual learner's program includes substantial instruction in the aural comprehension, speaking, reading and writing of English. The medium of instruction for teaching the history and culture of the United States *may* be English.

2.6 *Other Courses*

Instruction in courses such as art, music, and physical education may be given in the native language or English language mediums. Said instruction must provide for groupings which include English dominant children.

DISCUSSION

The courses or subjects to be taught through one or the other language medium shall depend upon the individual needs of a learner enrolled in a program of transitional bilingual education except that English as a second language shall be given in English and that the dominant language itself and the history and culture associated with it must be in the non-English medium.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LEVEL

At the elementary school level children *must not* be placed in a course or in a learning situation intended for native English speakers unless that child has been formally and officially transferred into the standard curriculum or unless the Bureau of Transitional Bilingual Education has approved in writing a placement other than that prescribed herein. This means that courses in Transitional Bilingual Education shall be organized specifically to treat English language deficiency situations.

STANDARD CURRICULUM means an organized program of subjects or courses intended for native speakers of English wherein the principal language of instruction is English.

SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL

At the secondary school level a limited English student may be placed in a course or in a learning situation intended for native English speakers only on approval of the Bureau of Transitional Bilingual Education. The dominant language must be used supportively in such situations.

In situations where there are sufficient numbers (see Appendix) of secondary students in a school district electing a given course, that course shall be conducted *principally* in the dominant language.

All courses required for graduation in a given course of study or curriculum must be taught through the use of the dominant language to the extent necessary for the learner to progress effectively in the pursuit of said course of study.

ORGANIZATION OF THE CURRICULUM

Just as there are a number of curriculum needs there are a number of ways to organize for them. To meet the minimum requirements of the Act, the organization of the curriculum shall ensure that the individual language and ability level of a learner be addressed. This can be done by establishing a ***system of levelling*** (i.e. individualizing instruction to meet the learner's needs) in organizing the curriculum.

This principle should be evidenced in all programs at the elementary school level with respect to meeting the legal requirements of the Act and the needs of the learner of limited English-speaking ability.

The full meaning of *levelling* in this context will be described in the appendix to these guidelines.

At the secondary school level the principle inherent in the concept of levelling shall also be the basis of decisions about the organizational patterns in the curriculum. The curriculum design should not be one of remediation, but rather one that recognizes the individual differences in language capability, learning capacity, and the academic and social background of the students.

APPENDIX: LEVELLING

1. Levelling is a process which allows every child to work at his own ability level at all times and which ensures that his moral and legal right to a transitional bilingual/bicultural education shall be met.
2. While levelling is applicable to any situation, it is particularly significant in large or small group instruction where subject matter units are organized in such a way to allow a child to move smoothly from one grouping to another depending on his ability level and whenever the need arises.
   - 2.1 For example, in the subject matter components several ability groupings shall be available to meet a variety of needs such as the following:
   - 2.1.1 A native language literate, zero English speaker
   - 2.1.2 A native language illiterate, zero English speaker
   - 2.1.3 A native language literate, severely limited English speaker
   - 2.1.4 A native language illiterate, severely limited English speaker
   - 2.1.5 A native language literate, partially limited English speaker
   - 2.1.6 A native language illiterate, partially limited English speaker
3. To meet the learner's needs, subject matter units of varying ability levels should be offered for each of the subject matter components.
   - 3.1 For example, the ESL component must ensure that zero English speakers are not grouped with partially limited English speakers. Native language illiterates should not be grouped with native language literate for instruction in reading. Several levels of ESL grouping should be available to meet the learner where he is.
   - 3.2 Ability level groupings are needed to satisfy the language and ability differences between, for example, a native literate and native illiterate. The learning process will differ, consequently the organization of the learning situation must differ.